



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

# Ask SHIP

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## **Q: I have heard there is a new Stimulus Package. Where are the funds going and will this affect Medicare or Social Security?**

To help the economy, the government has proposed a stimulus bill that will help fund some health-related programs. By providing tax cuts and investments in specific efforts, the government hopes to help Americans during tough economic times.

### **Qualified Individual (QI) Program**

The Stimulus Package calls for an extension of the Qualified Individual Program through December 31, 2010. This pays Part B premiums (\$96.40/month in 2009) for eligible Medicare beneficiaries (those with incomes below \$1,190/month or \$1,595 for couples with assets of less than \$4,000 or \$6,000 for couples).

People eligible for QI (and the other Medicare Savings Programs) are also automatically eligible for the Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy (LIS).

### **One-Time Payment**

A \$250 one-time payment goes to almost everyone who receives:

- Social Security,
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Railroad Retirement Benefits, and Veterans, Disability Compensation or Pension Benefits.

You must have received benefits in November, December 2008 or January 2009. Spouses each get a one-time payment. If you qualify, you should receive this payment in June, 2009.

You will not be eligible to receive this payment if:

- you owe state or federal agencies money or are delinquent on child support (amount will be offset)
- you are not living in the U.S. legally
- you are living overseas
- you have Social Security Income while in a nursing home or governmentally run facility
- you are denied benefits because you made false or misleading statements
- you are in prison, have violated parole or probation, or are a fleeing felon
- you are a child receiving Social Security

There is no need to file a tax return for this benefit. SSA is making this payment automatically (by direct deposit or mailed check). Payments are not taxable and won't count as income for purposes of determining eligibility for or the amount of any federal, state, or local benefit.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Federal Food Stamp Program)**

SNAP will receive an additional \$19.9 billion in funding. This will increase the benefit by 13.6% for recipients. This additional funding will begin no later than mid-April 2009.

### **Senior Nutrition Programs**

The following programs will also receive a total of \$100 million in additional funding:

- \$65 million for congregate meals
- \$32 million for home-delivered meals
- \$3 million for Native American nutrition services.

This funding is available immediately. No time period is required for expending the funds.

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## **Senior Employment**

SCSEP (Title V) will receive \$120 million. This could help create as many as 24,000 additional jobs for low-income older workers.

The funding is required to be distributed to current state and national grantees by mid-March and will be available through June 30, 2010.

## **Social Security Disability Claims**

\$500 million will be used for processing disability and retirement applications. The goal of these funds is to reduce the backlog of disability claims at Social Security. Funds are included to facilitate use of electronic medical records for disability claims.

For more information on other provisions of the new stimulus package, go to <http://www.recovery.gov/> or <http://INvest.in.gov/>.



**SHIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. For assistance, call your local SHIP site to make an appointment or call the state office at 1-800-452-4800 to obtain a list of local SHIP sites.**